

## Resolution of Council

**28 October 2024**

### **Item 11.2**

#### **Protecting Traditional Boarding Houses**

Moved by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor Weldon –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the Lord Mayor, the City of Sydney Council and staff have advocated for better protections for boarding houses and their residents by:
  - (i) writing to the NSW Government to repeatedly ask them to reform the outdated NSW Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy and the Guidelines for the Retention of Existing Affordable Rental Housing 2009 and to implement the long overdue recommendations of the statutory review of the Boarding Houses Act 2012;
  - (ii) writing to Community Housing Providers about opportunities to use the City's Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund and levies to purchase and deliver more boarding houses and other low-cost rental housing;
  - (iii) writing to the NSW Premier and Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading calling on them to urgently amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to prevent unlimited rent increases including in private boarding houses;
  - (iv) defending its refusal of the development application to convert the existing 32-room boarding houses at 58-60 and 62-64 Selwyn Street Paddington into four single dwellings in the Land and Environment Court;
  - (v) working with the community, Minister for Housing, Member for Sydney and Homes NSW to support residents through the court case, threat of eviction and possible relocations;
  - (vi) working with Redfern Legal Centre, which the City has funded through our grants program, to support the Selwyn Street residents to understand their rights and advise them through this very stressful period; and

- (vii) agreeing to host a roundtable with Community Housing Providers, Metropolitan Councils, Homes NSW, the Tenants' Union of NSW, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, the NSW Rental Commissioner and peak bodies about protecting and increasing safe and secure affordable rental housing;
- (B) Council further note:
- (i) the Selwyn Street boarding house tenants were issued with eviction notices on 21 October 2024 by the owner, LFD Developments. They have been given until 1 February 2025 to vacate their homes; and
  - (ii) the City's Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund supports the delivery of all forms of short and long term rental accommodation offered at below market rates, including affordable housing, social housing, crisis housing and boarding houses. Our Affordable Housing contributions program also enables Community Housing Providers to use levies for boarding houses;
- (C) Council endorse the community campaign for the protection of traditional boarding houses, which are an important form of private, relatively affordable housing in the inner city, and note that the campaign is calling for private boarding houses to be converted into permanent, protected affordable housing;
- (D) Council agree to continue to enforce adherence to safety, security and amenity standards through our required and proactive boarding house inspection program to ensure boarding houses maintain appropriate health and safety levels;
- (E) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to work with relevant NSW Government agencies to investigate supporting a Community Housing Provider to purchase the boarding houses at 58-60 and 62-64 Selwyn Street Paddington, including through joint funding;
- (F) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the NSW Rental Commissioner to advocate to the NSW Government to urgently extend the rights and protections recently introduced by the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2024 to occupancy agreements for residents of boarding houses to prevent unlimited rent increases in private boarding houses; and
- (G) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to provide advice to Council about potential amendments to the Council's Affordable Housing Contributions Distribution Plan and Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund to encourage permanent protection of boarding houses.

Carried unanimously.

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